

‘Anecdote and feeling over science and fact’: Exploring President Trump’s embrace of controversial anti-malarial drug

As he stares down a pandemic, economic collapse and a political crisis of his own, President Trump thinks he may have found a silver bullet: hydroxychloroquine.

He hears about the controversial anti-malarial drug on the phone from friends in New York, including from his personal attorney Rudolph W. Giuliani. He hears about it in White House meetings from some advisers eager to please the boss, who share anecdotes of the drug working on covid-19 patients. And he hears about it on television, from physicians on Fox News Channel panels who tout its efficacy.

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Never mind that hydroxychloroquine is an unproven treatment for covid-19 and is still in the testing stages, or that it has dangerous side effects for some, or that medical professionals are divided on its capability. The infectious-disease expert on Trump’s [coronavirus](#) task force, Anthony S. Fauci, has privately pleaded with the president to be more cautious.

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Trump’s swift embrace of hydroxychloroquine ... illustrates the degree to which the president prioritizes anecdote and feeling over science and fact. It also has provoked an ugly divide within a White House already besieged as it struggles to make up for lost time in slowing the spread of the coronavirus.

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